

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING OFFICER JOHN
BRUGGER

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the retirement of one of California's finest. Officer John Brugger of the California Highway Patrol is retiring after 31 years of honorable service.

Officer Brugger has spent 21 years of his career in Modesto in my district in California's great Central Valley, including the last 10 as the Public Affairs Officer. During his tenure, Officer Brugger has distinguished himself with the community. Officer Brugger is a Central Valley icon to those learning highway regulations and safety tips.

His many years of service have given him a unique outlook at public safety and a vast resource of examples for his presentations. Additionally, Brugger is a familiar face in many of the community programs involving youth. As a founding member of the Modesto Explorer Scout program, John has been recognized by the California Attorney General for his efforts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Officer Brugger for his contributions to the community. I also commend him for his courage in putting his life on the line as a California peace officer. It is an honor to call him my friend and I want to wish John and his wife, Linda, the very best as they embark on a new adventure.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to rise and join me in honoring California Highway Patrol Officer John Brugger.

HONORING PATTI JOHNSON

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a real leader in the field of education, Mrs. Patti Johnson, who is leaving the Colorado State Board of Education this coming January. Patti has been an active member of the board since 1995, representing the Second Congressional District of Colorado.

Patti leaves behind a legacy of activism through her tireless work to preserve the rights of parents to control and oversee the education and upbringing of their children. She has been especially effective in dispelling some of the myths associated with psychotropic drugs and the mislabeling of school children, a topic this Congress has addressed many times. In fact, Patti received national recognition when she obtained the successful passage of a resolution before the board encouraging school administrators to use proven academic and classroom management solu-

tions rather than medication to resolve behavior, attention, and learning difficulties.

Additionally, just this past September, Patti came to Washington, DC, to testify before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations at a hearing entitled "Behavioral Drugs in Schools: Questions and Concerns." Mainly due to Patti's testimony, the hearing was a tremendous success, and generated much interest among the public causing members to schedule additional future hearings on behavioral drugs.

Patti has also made other significant contributions to education as a member of the National Association of State Boards of Education and the Education Leaders Council. She is founder and president of Parent's Education Network and served as a mayoral appointee to the Broomfield City Council Ad Hoc Education Committee. Patti's philosophy on education is best exemplified by a statement she made: "Our schools are the only institution entrusted to attend to the academic needs of our children and their mission must not be diluted. I urge this committee to do everything in its power to get schools out of the business of labeling children and back to the job of teaching."

Mrs. Patti Johnson's leadership on the board will be sorely missed.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE POET,
GWENDOLYN BROOKS

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the great African American poet, Gwendolyn Brooks. She is perhaps the most honored African American poet ever. Her works are strong, powerful, and visual. I was emotionally moved over and over again by her great talent. I insert into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD this tribute to her which appeared in the Washington Post on December 5, 2000.

[From the Washington Post, December 5, 2000]

GWENDOLYN BROOKS, POET NURTURER
(By Jabari Asim)

Gwendolyn Brooks made me skip class. The celebrated poet, who died Sunday night at the age of 83, didn't exactly twist my arm. Still, I felt that the choice between attending interminable lectures and bearing witness to her three-day residency at my college was no choice at all.

Once or twice during my undergraduate days in mid-'80s Chicago, I'd lingered in the background at Haki Madhubuti's intimate South Side bookstore, sneaking peeks at Ms. Brooks while she read from her many volumes. An aspiring poet, I couldn't even bring myself to ask her to sign a book for me, a request freely granted to more courageous souls.

When I heard she was coming to campus, however, I changed my mind. This time I'd see her up close, I resolved. For three glo-

rious days, my other subjects were all but forgotten while I soaked up the poet's wisdom. I still remember her quick, saucy wit, the majestic turban she wore, the gleam of maternal pride that illuminated her cheekbones when she introduced her daughter, Nora. Gracious, patient and fully comfortable in that charged swirl of energetic young minds, she regally held forth on modern poetry, feminism, emerging writers she admired. In a wide-ranging give-and-take with a women's studies class, she even confessed to a fondness for soap operas.

I remember the poems she read, too. "The Pool Players. Seven at the Golden Shover," perhaps her best-known work, acquired a surprisingly caustic edge when she pronounced its short, acerbic lines.

We real cool. We Left school. We Lurk late. We Strike straight. We Sing sin. We Thin gin. We Jazz June, We Die soon.

She was nearing 70 then, and her voice was strong. The last day of her residency, she read before a campus-wide audience, then appeared as honored guest at an evening reception. It was there, amid the brie and wine and tweed, that I summoned all my moxie and introduced myself. I thrust a sheaf of papers at her, poems and stories full of the angst-driven pretentiousness I favored then. We talked a couple of minutes. She was courteous, I was breathless, and I can't recall a word that was said. Less than a week later, I found a note in my mailbox.

"He, Thanks for the opportunity to go through this heavy drama. Richly, exhausting! Have a fine, creative summer! My summer will be devoted to writing—at last!) Gwen Brooks."

The words themselves are a model of tact, encouraging but noncommittal. No matter, though: The fact that she's read my work and responded to it was indisputable evidence of my growing brilliance.

I didn't know then that as a teenager, Brooks had sent her poems to Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson, both of whom sent encouraging replies. Nor did I know—despite the scenes that I witnessed at the bookstore—that Brooks made it her business to encourage all young writers. Perhaps the kind, prompt responses she'd received from Hughes and Johnson influenced her to be generous in turn. At the time, I had no interest in deciphering Brooks's motives. All I cared was that I had a handwritten note from the poet laureate of Illinois, the first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize for literature.

Brooks's first book, "A Street in Bronzeville" (1945), had already won critical acclaim, so she was hardly an unknown entity when her next book, "Annie Allen," claimed the Pulitzer in 1950. Both books were praised for the author's mastery of sonnets, ballads and other traditional European forms. Like Countee Cullen and Claude McKay before her, she knew how to apply such forms to the African American experience and infuse them with desperately needed new energy.

Subsequent books, beginning with "In the Mecca" (1968), reflected a change in tone, a more overtly political stance that was often aimed at black readers in particular. For some critics, the change was reason to ignore Brooks's output; for aspiring black writers of subsequent generations, the shift

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

showed us that it was possible to adapt to changing times without distorting one's own voice. At its best, Brooks's work is focused and fiery regardless of form, indisputably Brooksonian in its well-tempered elegance. To borrow critic Joanne V. Gabbin's phrase, Brooks's work "implies a literature that is both rageful and resolute in its beauty."

Gabbin convened a conference at James Madison University in 1994. She conceived the conference, titled "Furious Flower" (from a Brooks poem, "Second Sermon on the Warpland"), as a tribute to Brooks. Poets, critics and poetry lovers from around the world gathered at JMU that September; it was the last time I saw Brooks in person.

There, as the reigning eminence of African American poetry, Brooks received numerous accolades and testimonies to her talent and generosity. Two generations of black poets had come to age since Brooks's own emergence, and she'd played a hand in mentoring many of them. (Although she was then 77, Brooks still had mentoring left to do. In 1996 she would establish the Henry Blakely Poetry Prize in memory of her late husband. The \$2,000 award went to a young poet of Brooks's choosing.)

Grateful to be on hand and once again basking in the glow of genius, I felt proud to be among those who had firsthand familiarity with Brooks's goodness. Our wine-and-brie encounter had not been our last.

In 1993, I'd had another opportunity to benefit from her kindness. While editing a literary magazine I'd co-founded, I wrote to Brooks and asked her to contribute to a section honoring poet Audre Lorde, who had died in 1992. As she had done nearly a decade before, Brooks responded quickly. In the brief, eloquent tribute she submitted, she insisted that the essence of Lorde would never be lost as long as we had her words. I don't think she'd mind my applying those sentiments to her legacy as well. We have not lost the essence of Gwendolyn Brooks. The best of her endures.

TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR DENNIS
B. ROSS—SPECIAL MIDDLE EAST
COORDINATOR

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the Congress to join me in paying tribute to Ambassador Dennis B. Ross, who has served both Democratic and Republican Presidents and Secretaries of State as the Special Middle East Coordinator at the Department of State. Over the past decade, Dennis has done more than anyone else in the effort to bring peace and stability to that troubled region of the world.

A short while ago, Dennis made public his intention to work through the end of this current Administration, but he also made clear that he does not intend to work in the next administration. The reasons for his departure are quite understandable—he wants to spend more time with his wife and three children. Considering the time that he has devoted to shuttling between the United States and the Middle East—many times at very short notice and under extremely difficult circumstances—he deserves the opportunity for more time with his family.

Dennis Ross will be sorely missed as we seek to bring an end to the violence, hostility

and instability that have plagued the Middle East for so long. He has played a critical role in dealing with that troubled part of the world for over the past decade. He knows all of the key players, he has worked with them, he understands their political constraints, and he has an intimate grasp of their ideological points of view.

A native of California, Dennis Ross did undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of California at Los Angeles, where his doctoral thesis focused on Soviet decision-making. He began his career in Washington in the early 1980s working at the Department of Defense and the Department of State. From 1986 to 1988 he held the Middle East portfolio at the National Security Council staff at the White House. At the beginning of the George Bush Administration, Dennis became Director of the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State with the rank of Ambassador. He worked closely and directly with James A. Baker on a broad range of U.S. foreign policy issues, but he played a particularly critical role in bringing about the Madrid Conference of 1991 which began the peace process negotiations that led to the Oslo accord of 1993.

When the Clinton administration took office in early 1993, Dennis remained at the Department of State as Special Middle East Coordinator. He continued his efforts to further the peace process, working actively and directly with Secretary Warren Christopher and Secretary Madeleine Albright.

Mr. Speaker, Dennis Ross has been an outstanding and a devoted public servant—he has spent incredible time and energy in furthering the foreign policies of the United States. His service to our nation is the epitome of bipartisanship in foreign policy. I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Dennis Ross for his committed service to our nation and in wishing him success in his future endeavors.

HONORING ARTHUR "PAUL"
BAXTER

HON. GARY A. CONDIT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Arthur "Paul" Baxter on the occasion of his retirement from the City of Modesto on December 28, 2000.

Paul is a quiet man who has worked tirelessly for the city for 12 years. His strong ability to build consensus and bring collaboration has made him not only an asset, but often, a necessity. His work with city council committees and citizen advisory groups has been invaluable. During Paul's tenure at the City, I have had the privilege of working with him on many projects. I, along with those he has served, will sorely miss him.

Some of his many accomplishments include his leadership and direction in the Joint City/County Administration Building, his work with the development and completion of a Joint Emergency Dispatch Center, and his dedication and commitment to the Tuolumne River Regional Park Master Plan.

Above all, Paul is a devoted father, son and brother. He is a thoughtful and generous neighbor and friend. An avid gardener, he

shares his abundant supply of flowers, including his famous sweet peas, with his neighbors and coworkers. He is an alumnus of Stanford University and has remained active in fundraising efforts and community programs since 1996.

Beyond his 12 years of dedication and commitment to the City of Modesto, he has quietly and generously supported and volunteered for causes such as the library sales tax and the Performing Arts Center.

Paul exemplifies a good man. He is kind, generous, decent and caring not only to his family, but to his neighbors, his friends, his coworkers and his community. Because of Paul's association in Modesto, our community is a much better place.

It is a privilege to call him friend.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Paul Baxter.

HONORING COLORADO STATE
SENATOR JOHN EVANS

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor State Senator John Evans. Over the years, John has significantly contributed to ensuring Colorado's children have access to the best education possible. As Colorado State Board of Education Member-at-Large, and now as a state senator, John has exemplified the Colorado State Board of Education's motto, "To lead, serve, and to promote quality education for all," throughout his public service career.

Elected to the board in 1994, John fought hard to get dollars to the classroom. As you know, this is not only a struggle at the state level, but a constant battle at the federal level. Republicans like Senator Evans have fought hard to enable local school districts to manage and direct their funding. We know teachers, parents, and school districts are best qualified to determine how their money should be spent.

To make certain that dollars get to the classroom, state school leaders are the best line of accountability. Senator Evans has followed through, and Colorado's children reap the benefits. Mr. Speaker, John Evans has consistently advocated funding local schools directly from the state, rather than filtering money through various bureaucracies. As a parent of five with three children in a public charter school, I thank him for his efforts.

I remember the theme of John's senatorial campaign was, "Helping individuals help their children." More specifically, he said, "I want to help individuals develop a stewardship so they can develop their own legacy. I want to raise decision making to a higher level. I want to get away from politics and think about how what we do affects children." Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform this House John Evans continues to serve the public in Colorado. I wish there were more like him.